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THE Commonweal

POPE JOHN XXIII

Another St. Francis? | *JOHN COGLEY*

Voice of The Good Shepherd | *ROBERT McAFEE BROWN*

A Gift of Holiness | *GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN*

Break with the Past | *MICHAEL NOVAK*

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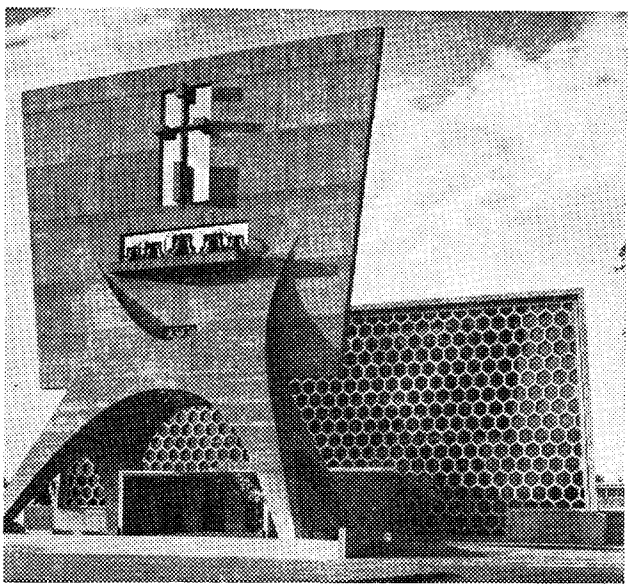

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THE COMMONWEAL

232 Madison Avenue, New York 16, N.Y.

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THE COMMONWEAL

A WEEKLY REVIEW OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

A Moral Crisis

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S splendid address to the nation on the racial crisis marks a real departure. For the first time the President cast the problem in unequivocal moral terms. It was a rare appeal made directly to the nation at large, and showing flashes of emotion even rarer in a Kennedy address. Previous appeals by the Administration had seemed all too cool or vaguely annoying. Whether it was a reminder to Southern businessmen that a higher rate of Negro employment would boost profits in the long run, or a warning to Maryland shopkeepers that all Africa was watching their discrimination, the root issue of human anguish never quite seemed to be brought into focus. This time it was. As the President said, the Negro is "not yet freed from the bonds of injustice." He stressed the shorter life expectancy of the Negro and the economic and educational disabilities that come with being born black in this country.

But for all its force, the President's address did not stand out above the course of events as it would have if delivered several months ago. Initiative is clearly in the hands of Negro demonstrators, and the President's address was less an act of leadership than an attempt to catch up with a movement that has surged right past the politicians. What the President says, and what he says he plans to do, are admirable. But events have robbed him of many prerogatives of leadership. The tremendous resources of office are, of course, available. Nevertheless the President seems to be cast in the role of honest broker between Negroes on the march and whites who are determined to resist.

The trouble is that the Negroes are in no mood to accept a broker. In the words of Martin Luther King, they want "all, here, now," and their approach is becoming more militant, not less. They are fed up, not only with political promises, but the kind of compromises that our political system is set up to produce. In a day when Congress is barely ready to offer half-way measures, the era of half-way measures has suddenly disappeared.

There is no mistaking the mood of the Negro people. "The contagion of heroism," as one leader put it, has spread like wildfire across the country. It is clear that the demonstrations which now explode like sunbursts in many states at once are not a passing phase of discontent to be cured by political tinkering. The leaders of the demonstrations are not at all disposed to this kind of tinkering. If they should become so, they would be swept aside by the momentum they have created. Behind Martin Luther King stand the younger and more aggressive Negroes for whom James Baldwin is a spokesman. Behind them all are the Black Muslims, whose preachments of race hate and violence stand as an eloquent alternative to the non-violent assaults on segregation.

THE TRAGEDY is that we have deferred full justice for the Negro so long that a movement has developed with a dynamic that allows little or no compromise. White liberals, well-meaning bystanders in this drama, may applaud the sudden and dramatic success of the Negro protest movement. But they may also shudder at the thought of a showdown in which neither Negroes nor whites—and we can include Congress here—are prepared to yield. In 1963, a full one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation, the great push for full Negro rights has come, committed to nonviolence but bristling with impatience and frustration.

The prospects for action by Congress are not pleasant to contemplate. For weeks now, the President has been laying the groundwork for his long-awaited civil rights program. He has consulted and exhorted Congressional leaders of both parties, businessmen, mayors, labor leaders and ex-Presidents. Yet chances for Congressional approval are slight. Public statements by Senators and Repre-

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sentatives would indicate that Congress has been shaken by the course of recent events, but probably not enough. Barring some sort of unexpected intervention, the prospects are for either a "compromise" law, unacceptable to Negroes, or a full-scale filibuster by Southerners to avoid any kind of legislation at all.

In addition the Negro leadership is considering a mass march on Washington late this summer in an effort to keep the pressure on Congress. The effect of this could be disastrous. Congress is unlikely to act at all; it is even more unlikely to act if it feels it is being threatened.

A Congressional filibuster would be even worse. It could bring a full-scale constitutional crisis and would certainly give rise to racial violence. Given the state of race tensions today, it is a moot point whether such violence could be contained before it exploded into a domestic war.

Prohibiting a filibuster in the Senate requires 67 votes, or all Northern and Western Democrats plus 22 of the 33 Republicans—a dismal enough prospect. Past experience suggests the impossibility of gathering these 67 votes. On the other hand, the Senate has never been so directly confronted with the prospect of civil violence as the consequence for refusing to deal with the race question. The hope is that attempts to build a bipartisan coalition against a Senate filibuster will bear fruit. Recent comments by Senator Everett Dirksen have not been promising. But the results of a long filibuster are even less promising.

Battle Against Hunger

IF DEBATES over the new Malthusianism took up most of the news columns on the FAO World Food Congress, certain dimensions of the world's current food problem also stood out. There are several ways of indicating the extent of today's need: life expectancy rates in various undernourished countries, the estimate that half of humanity suffers from malnutrition, the *Newsweek* statement that more people are dying from malnutrition or starvation today "than at any time in history."

One explanation is the wide disparity in productivity that exists between various countries. Whereas many an Indian peasant requires the most favorable growing conditions to raise enough food for his own small family, the American farmer produces enough to feed twenty-seven persons (hence huge annual surpluses), while a New Zealander can provide for forty to fifty others. Japanese farmers produce three times as much rice per acre as their Indian counterparts.

What are the chief obstacles to raising low production? At the base there is general lack of education as well as absence of knowledge of more productive techniques. Capital is not available for procuring better implements and fertilizer. Poor nutrition and a never-ending struggle for subsistence thwart any ambition to apply new and more effective farming methods.

Lack of protein is primarily responsible for the high incidence of sickly children and child mortality. In South America, Africa and the Far East the native diet of starches and carbohydrates fails to supply the protein required by growing bodies—a requirement that lessens as the child matures.

Suggested ways of meeting this vital protein deficiency played a prominent part at the FAO congress. Two important kinds of nutritious diet supplements have been developed. One is a fish flour, the other a series of oil seed derivatives made from soybeans, peanuts, cottonseeds or coconuts. (For several years now Meals for Millions of Los Angeles has been distributing its multi-purpose soybean food supplement to needy lands at the cost to donors of only three cents a meal.) At the congress an indication of the potentialities of science was provided by Daniel Bovet of Italy, who told of a process whereby one hundredth of the world's production of petroleum could supply three million tons of edible protein.

The development of synthetics has released vast acreages of food production; acres under cultivation could be doubled. More surplus foodstuffs could be shipped to provide temporary stopgaps. Additional technical personnel could greatly extend the instruction on new methods. Introduction of protein supplements on a larger scale would save lives and restore ambition. Special trade arrangements could give a real lift to the underdeveloped countries. A well-coordinated series of such practicable measures would go a long way toward meeting the urgent current need.

Folly in Vietnam

AS IF things were not difficult enough already, the recent events in South Vietnam have changed from a bad dream into something approaching a nightmare. There has always been matter for distress in the fact that the leadership of President Ngo Dinh Diem is, if not exactly totalitarian, authoritarian in the extreme. Its main virtue has been its opposition to Communist imperialism; hence, as the lesser of two evils, the United States has given its support to President Diem's regime. As in other instances, the U.S. has supported a right-wing dictatorship, which

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allows no opposition or freedom of the press, to save a nation from a left-wing conquest.

All this was bad enough, the kind of nasty pill one swallows to avoid a worse disease. But, speaking as Catholics, we find the pill all the nastier since the regime is Catholic in composition, indeed, aggressively so. Despite the fact that only ten percent of the population is Catholic, Catholicism occupies a special place in government life; this has been one important reason why the government has not had the full support of the people. There have, of course, been other reasons also: the most obvious is that the government has been run as if it were the property of President Diem's family. The ancient art of nepotism has flourished.

The only thing missing from this unpleasant brew was some good evidence that non-Catholics were being suppressed because of their religion. That was the only thing lacking in a picture which came close to fulfilling Everyman's idea of the classic right-wing Catholic government. But now, thanks to the grotesque attempt of the regime to forbid the flying of Buddhist flags, the missing element has been supplied. In a country where, reportedly, the gold and white papal flag is much in evidence, the government saw fit to deny Buddhists the right to display their flag. The folly and injustice of this act was compounded by the shooting of a number of Buddhist demonstrators, peaceably protesting the restriction. Despite considerable evidence to the contrary, the government has refused to admit its guilt for the shooting.

For once, however, President Diem got the worst of the affair. Forced, from one side, by the United States and, from the other, by popular pressures, he has now agreed to allow Buddhists to fly their flag on religious holidays. From a purely political point of view, the idea of placing restrictions on Buddhists in a country with a seventy percent Buddhist population (and an even higher percentage in the Army) staggers the imagination. As an instance of Catholics in action, it is the kind of incident which brings shudders of mortification. Furthermore, any suggestion that President Diem's change in policy came as a result of such considerations may be doubted. More likely, he just gave in to some well-deserved pressure.

It has never been easy to cheer for American support of President Diem, even while it has been possible to grant his earlier courage and anti-colonial work. It is all but impossible now. The sooner South Vietnam develops a new spirit the better. But how can that be done? We only wish we knew. One thing, at any rate, is evident. The United States should use every bit of pressure it can muster to encourage or force President Diem to behave in a way compatible with the ultimate purpose of any meaningful anti-Communism: a preservation and extension of freedom. American money has kept his regime in power; it should not be used to subsidize a dictatorship. If it is not already too late, President Diem should be left with no doubts on this point.

Test-Ban Confusion

AS IF TO symbolize some of the confusion which bedevils the achievement of a test-ban agreement, two incidents are worth noting. The first was the favorable comment of columnist David Lawrence on President Kennedy's speech at American University. In that speech, Mr. Kennedy proposed a "strategy of peace" and announced a new series of negotiations coupled with a suspension of American atmospheric tests. Noting both the good will and the realism of the speech, Mr. Lawrence said that, if the Soviet Union allowed publication of the text, then he would be prepared to believe that some possible change in attitude was in the air. This was a speculation that made considerable sense.

But, oddly enough, the Soviet Union did publish the speech in *Izvestia* and *Pravda*—yet at the same time Premier Khrushchev reacted in a depressingly negative way to it. In sum, he asserted that the West would have to accept Soviet terms for any ban and strongly implied that they would no longer agree even to the two or three inspections on Soviet soil previously conceded. Thus, on the face of it, the evidence of Soviet good will which Mr. Lawrence was prepared to accept was negated by Mr. Khrushchev's response.

It is virtually impossible to determine what the Soviet response means. Doubtless, Chinese pressure has something to do with their intransigence as does the probability that the Soviet Union has plans for a fall series of atmospheric tests. By announcing a moratorium on such tests—"so long as other states do not do so"—Mr. Kennedy managed to seize the initiative; it is plausible that Mr. Khrushchev wanted to blunt the impact of this move before it had any chance of influencing world opinion. Significantly, he ignored the U.S. moratorium in his response.

The prospects, then, for a meaningful test-ban agreement appear no better than ever. What the Soviet Union gives with one hand it seems to take away with the other. The only important advance is that the U.S. has suspended its atmospheric tests. We hope the Soviet Union does likewise. But what if it does not? Then we would hope that the American suspension remains in effect, at least for the time being. That much at least this country can do to stem the arms race.

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Good Pope John

SO FAR in my lifetime there have been four Popes. Benedict XV died in 1922, when I was only four years old, so I really knew only three—Pius XI, Pius XII and John XXIII. All these men were good Popes. Indeed, one has only to read a little history to realize how blessed we moderns have been in our Popes. But John XXIII was more than a good Pope; he was a great Pope. In less than five years he did more to change the public image and the internal direction of the Church than any Pope in hundreds of years. It is hardly possible that we will see his like again, but his spirit in the Church will not down easily.

How explain John's impact, on the Church and the world? One can say he was a saint, and I would not disagree. But Pius XII was a saintly man, too; yet for all his labors he never had the impact John had. There was, of course, the question of personality: Pius was reserved, ascetic; John was outgoing, warm, friendly to all. This was important. But there was, I think, something more than that.

Pope John had a special gift for cutting through the non-essentials of the faith to its Gospel center. Any institution that lives for nineteen hundred years acquires its own special customs, its own time-encrusted ways of doing things. The Church that could take in and baptize everything from pagan feasts to Aristotle is no exception. A great part of John's strength was his unerring instinct for cutting through centuries of legalism and stale traditions to somewhere near the heart of what it means to be a Christian.

Countless sermons told us to love our enemy; Pope John sent greetings to Khrushchev and received his son-in-law in an audience, and suddenly the Gospel injunction took on flesh and blood. Oft-repeated injunctions about the works of mercy found our ears deaf; Pope John in one of his first acts visited a Roman prison, and suddenly the days of the Apostles were new again. (And this with what seems to me a most Christian sense of humor: "I knew you could not visit me, so I have come to you.")

Six million Jews were dead, and there was no saving them now; but John greeted a Jewish delegation by saying "I am Joseph, your brother," and no one could doubt how Christians should feel about the dreadful issue. A special bond unites all Christians, we were always told; then Pope John received the Archbishop of Canterbury, the first such visit since the Reformation, and ecumenism came alive and we knew at once how to judge the fact that in some towns ministers and priests barely speak. Over the years pomp and circumstance have almost cut the Pope off from popular view, even more than Bishops; Pope John consented to be carried aloft in the traditional style only so the people could see him.

In the world's most important spiritual post, the temptation to confuse man and office must be great; Pope John kept his sense of proportion, and ours, by making jokes with himself as target. The world stresses pride of birth and place; Pope John gloried that he was the son of humble parents and never let the world forget it. American Catholics were all right, many non-Catholics always told us, but Rome was what they feared; John was elected, and Rome became a world standard for what was Christian. In our narrowness, we tend to shrink the Church, to make it our own private club; more than any man in our time, John restored the root meaning to the word Catholic.

In an age of growing secularization, the great Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr has written, the temptation of the churches and of churchmen is to irrelevance and triviality—to preoccupation with trivial concerns while the world hovers on the brink of the abyss. This is, I think, a great truth. We fortify our milk for infants with Vitamin D, while we continue to poison the atmosphere with thermonuclear testing. We talk of the Prince of Peace, while the greatest arms race in the history of the world goes almost unnoticed. We live in an affluent society, where the great problem at Christmas is what to get for the man who has everything, while the poor and the unemployed remain hidden and invisible to our unseeing eyes. We talk of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, while racism makes a mockery of our words in most of our cities and—yes—our parishes.

John's great gift, I think, was to be able to see things new—to see things with Christian eyes. He was childlike in the scriptural sense of the term. Was the disparity between rich nations and poor an affront to Christian conscience? He said so. Was racism a stench in Christian nostrils? He said so. Were nationalism and pride threatening the peace of the world? He said so. Was the danger of thermonuclear war the pre-eminent fact of our time? He said so. Pope John asked the right questions, and he gave the right answers—answers that cut right through the tired evasions and weak rationalizations most of us are willing to settle for. In the process he made the Church relevant to our time, in a way no one else has been able to do.

This was, in short, no ordinary man and no ordinary Pope. At this point, I don't think we can even begin to estimate the extent of his contribution. Whoever his successor, John XXIII will be a hard man to follow. He was God's special gift to the Church. May he rest in peace.

JAMES O'GARA

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Another Saint Francis?

JOHN COGLEY

FOR YEARS we heard that the world needed another Francis of Assisi, a saint who by the sheer force of his personality and human qualities would dramatize the message of Christianity in modern times. We have not lacked saints in our generation. When the history of the era is seen in perspective, it may turn out that we have had our full share of holy martyrs, bishops, virgins, widows, penitents, and confessors. But none of them, even among the canonized, has fulfilled what might be called Saint Francis' special vocation, to be a saint whose appeal reached out to men everywhere. Those who looked for "another Saint Francis" had that rare quality in mind.

One of the last places where they might have expected to find such a saint was the Vatican. To be sure, holy men have sat on the throne of Saint Peter in modern times; one of them, Pius X, is enrolled among the canonized. But in a divided Christendom, in an age of secularism, the appeal of a saintly Pope could not be expected to reach far beyond the Catholic body. Even among Catholics, the life of a Saint who was the Vicar of Christ on earth would seem, until lately, too remote and distant to serve as a suitable model for ordinary men and women. Like the growing list of Mother Foundresses who have recently been canonized, such a Saint would seem to have a limited appeal.

Perhaps canonization has become too canonical to satisfy the world's hunger for sanctity. In any case, latter day canonizations seem due more to the holy rivalry existing between monastic families than to any "service" the new saints might offer as models to the Church universal. Their life histories are monotonously similar. Even their names are quickly forgotten. One and all, they have been holy men and women, the heroism of their virtue authoritatively certified by the Church—but none has been the "new Saint Francis" whom many hoped would revitalize Christian energy in the world.

It rests with one of his successors to declare whether Pope John ranks with the heroes of holiness recognized by the Church. But in the more mundane usage of the word "saint," he has been popularly canonized already. In a less juridical era, the crowds in Saint Peter's Square would have enthusiastically pronounced the declaration when word came of his death. Most remarkable of all, the whole world would have been happy to join the acclamation.

It does not seem an exaggeration, under these circumstances, to state that the "new Saint Francis"— the one so many prayed for over so many years—died on June 3, 1963. That the world recognized him, despite the fact that he was not a poor friar wandering over the face of the earth with an apocalyptic message but lived amid the splendor and formality of the Vatican, cheerfully occupying the most awesome office on earth, only adds to the wonder and paradox of Pope John's life.

Already the legends are beginning to grow, but in the case of the late Pope, legend can only diminish, it cannot enhance his charm. One of the sayings attributed to him by newspapermen is that he told one of their number: "After I am gone, I hope it will be said that Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was a man." And what a man he was! In his person the human qualities shone forth with such fine Franciscan splendor that all men, whatever their religious faith or secular belief, were pleased, indeed anxious, to claim kinship with him.

We may live to see the day when that solid peasant body will be melted down to fashionable proportions and the winningly homely features will be prettified or "ennobled" in plaster statues. The "Saint"—the creature of the ecclesiastical P. T. Barnums—may in time crush the man. But we who have been fortunate enough to live during his short pontificate can never forget the reality. At his death a hard-boiled generation, friend and enemy, joined together in the simple declaration that here, indeed, was a man. And when some added, "Here, too, was a Christian," it became exquisitely certain, at least for awhile, that there was no contradiction between the two claims. John XXIII was no less a man because he was stunningly Christian; he was no less a Christian because he was stunningly human.

EVERY Francis-like saint has a great message for his age. Pope John's, it seems to me, was this: it is good to be a man. For a tired, pessimistic, unhappy world he served as a living illustration that the Lord he believed in came not to deny life but to make it more abundant.

Almost by definition a saint is a teacher. The Church long ago instituted the process of canonization not only to glorify its heroes but to hold up their example as object lessons to the faithful. As the author of two mag-

JOHN COGLEY, of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, contributes a regular column to these pages.

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nificent encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, the late Holy Father taught the men of his generation. If he did nothing else during his pontificate, issuing these masterful documents would have assured him of a place in the history of great Pontiffs. But I believe he taught more surely by the example he set, the spontaneous expression of his own nature, than he did by the pen. When his encyclicals become mere footnotes or are superseded by others equally brilliant, the lessons John XXIII taught merely by being the kind of person he was will still be remembered.

He was a quiet, gentle revolutionary, this Pope, whose dynamite—as might have been expected of another Saint Francis—was faith, hope, and charity. In an age of despair, he boldly suggested happy endings, whether he was talking about a divided Christianity or a war-threatened world. Half the world called him Holy Father; to the other half, he made it clear that whether or not they would have him for a spiritual father, he would take them for brothers. "I am Joseph, your brother," Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, told a group of Jewish visitors. "They tell me you are an atheist," he told Mr. Khrushchev's son-in-law, "but surely you will accept an old man's blessing for your children."

Always the Pope saw beyond the theological, ideological, or political barrier and struck directly at the person. I never heard of a single man or woman whose ideology was invulnerable to this sweet wound. This much at least, then, he taught the world, that behind all the trappings of the "systems," truths and errors that make modern history, with its cruelties and its wars, are human beings. He was not the first Catholic theologian to distinguish between error and the person who accepts error nor was he the first to insist that no man is as good or as bad as his principles. But he was the first I can remember who made that simple, almost obvious proposition credible as Catholic teaching. Pope John from the beginning, stepped out of the shadows of the Inquisition that has darkened the view of the Catholic Church for, oh so long, for so many modern men.

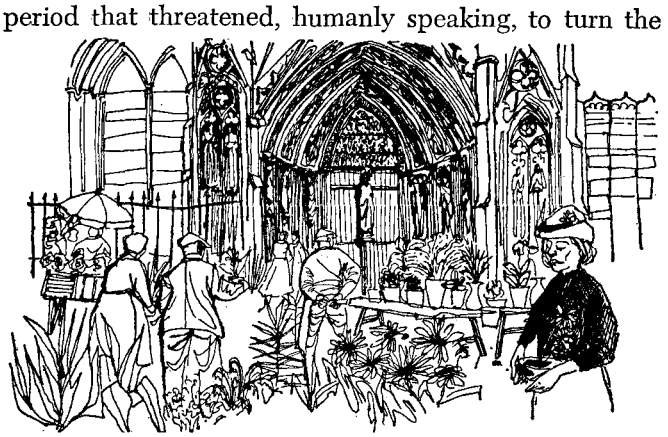
Yet, no one can say that he served charity at the expense of truth. To do so would have been as great a betrayal as they are guilty of who serve truth at the expense of charity. He never forgot for one moment that he was the Supreme Pontiff of a teaching Church whose central doctrines are set forth not as mere opinions or tentative propositions but as infallibly true.

In all the years that I have been reading and writing for The Commonweal, the article that made the most impression on me was one written in the early fifties by the English Dominican, Father Gerald Vann. In it, Father Vann insisted that it was not enough to *have* the truth; the mode of truth was also all-important. The truth, Father Vann said, can be compromised by vulgarization, trivialization, and irreverence; when it is used as a weapon to defend the ego or worn as a halo in a spirit of self-righteousness, it is just as surely betrayed as when it is coldly denied. Pope John's attitude toward the truth he served was a model of what Father Vann was talking about. It is commonplace now to say that he was neither an outstanding theologian nor a profound philosopher. That may well be true. But this one, indispensable intellectual virtue, reverence for the truth, was outstandingly his. With it, he silently shamed all of us who are inclined to glory in a splendor that belongs to God alone. In this sense, the peasant pope may be not only "another Saint Francis" but another Thomas Aquinas as well.

THE FAMOUS prayer of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement, which incidentally was first composed by Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, may not even have been known to Pope John: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." But whether or not he knew the prayer, the Holy Father seemed to live by it.

Neither in his ecumenical work nor in his efforts for peace, did he ever set down impossible conditions or make impossible demands. He accepted the world, not as the world might be, or as it should be, or even as it could be, but as it is—and he went on from there. Reality was ever his starting point. This kind of realism shocked the stiff-necked and the overly doctrinaire at first who wondered what manner of Pope was this who put so little emphasis on suspicion. But I believe that if there was any doubt about the wisdom in his approach, the outpouring of grief that followed upon the Pope's death showed that he was wise in adopting it. A united Christendom is more a possibility than it was before Pope John was crowned. More men on both sides of the Iron Curtain believe more firmly in the possibility of peace. We are a little closer to the ideal than we were and a great deal closer than a rigidly doctrinaire position would have brought us.

The Holy Father's impact on the Church was of course the most direct and immediate accomplishment of his life. His call for *aggiornamento* marked the end, some say, of a long overdrawn Counter-Reformation period that threatened, humanly speaking, to turn the



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Church into a sect and leave Catholicism an irrelevance in the modern world. In enlivening and invigorating his own Church, in exorcising once and for all the ghost of Modernism that has haunted so many for so long, the Pope gave added strength to all Christian faiths and paved the way for the ultimate reunion that may be in God's plan for the world. Because John XXIII lived, bishops have happier flocks, priests are closer to their people, the Catholic people feel freer, more content, the separated brethren are less separated. The Jews know they had a friend in the Vatican, as do other non-Christians. The Communists feel less inimical to the Church, as do atheists and agnostics.

The Pope did not change the world, but he came as close to doing so as any human agent could. If John XXIII was not the new Saint Francis we looked for, what manner of man will such a saint be? It can be said of Pope John that because he lived, there is more love in the world. History can make no more splendid judgment of any man.

A Protestant Viewpoint

Voice of the Good Shepherd

ROBERT McAFEE BROWN

THERE ARE many stories about Pope John, some true to fact, some true to type, a few, no doubt, apocryphal. But one that is particularly well authenticated, and captures the spirit of the man, is the account of his audience with a group of Jews shortly after assuming the pontificate. When the delegation entered the room, the Pope, rather than waiting for them to approach him, rose from his chair, walked into their midst, held out his arms, and, using his Christian name, said to them, "I am Joseph, your brother."

This is a good symbol of the impact that Pope John made upon the non-Catholic world. The papacy has always been an area of the life of Roman Catholicism from which non-Catholics have felt more than ordinarily separated. Part of the reason for this may be that, with whatever other gifts they had, recent incumbents of the Papal Chair have not given the impression of outgoing warmth in personal relations. That Pope John was able to overcome, and indeed to destroy, this image of austerity and aloofness in a space of less than five years, is one of those facts of history that could never have been predicted in advance. In the past, the death of a pope has not been a fact about which non-Catholics felt a particular sense of personal involvement. But the death of Pope John has been the death of Joseph, our brother, and we feel his loss as the loss of a member of our family.

The important thing is not simply that Giuseppe Roncalli was this warm human being, our brother, but that it was the Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church who was this warm human person. There have been periods in papal history when it seemed to us that the splendor of the Holy See was a bit tarnished in comparison to the simplicity of the Holy Family. At times it has not been as clear to us as it should have been that the Pope was *Servus servorum Dei*, and some popes left an image of human pretension rather than divine condescension. The very qualities of humanity and humility that so endeared Pope John to the non-Catholic world are illustrated by another audience shortly after his pontificate began. He received a group of Roman Catholics who immediately knelt in his presence. He urged them to rise, but they stayed on their knees. "You are the Vicar of Christ," one of them asserted. To which Pope John responded, "You do not kneel before the Vicar of Christ. You kneel only before Christ."

The Protestant theologian Karl Barth once remarked, after surveying the history of the Papal See for several centuries, "I cannot hear the voice of the Good Shepherd from this See of Peter." That remark now sounds curiously dated, as Karl Barth would probably be the first to acknowledge. For during the pontificate of John XXIII we have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd, solicitous not only for those inside, but for those outside the sheepfold as well.

IT WOULD NOT be proper to credit Pope John with the initiation of concern for those outside the sheepfold, as though the present surge of ecumenical interest from the Roman Catholic side were his creation alone. But what he did, and what was so important, was to give his blessing to the ecumenical forces already tentatively at work within the Roman Catholic Church, encouraging them and supporting them, so that ecumen-

ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN, Professor of Religion at Stanford, contributes a regular column to these pages.

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ical Catholics soon came to realize that they were not merely being tolerated, and were not merely fringe voices, but were articulating those emphases that the Holy Father wished to have at the center of the church's life and concern. To this end, the creation of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, as a permanent Secretariat within the church, stands as a very important symbol—perhaps as important as anything the Second Vatican Council will do. For, as Father Jerome Hamer, O.P., has remarked on behalf of many ecumenically-minded Catholic theologians, "Now, because of the creation of the Secretariat, we have a structure. Now we know that we speak through and for the church, and not just for ourselves."

The structure is important. As important if not more important, however, is the spirit that stood behind the creation of the structure. Pope John did not originate the term "separated brethren," to describe those of us outside the visible structure of the Roman Catholic Church. But he did give the phrase popular currency within Catholic life, and for him the noun was basic rather than the adjective. To him we were first of all "brethren," and only secondarily, if tragically, "separated." This kind of inflection has been responsible for highlighting a neglected emphasis in Catholic thought, the conviction that any baptized Christian is in some sense, by virtue of his baptism, joined already into the mystical body of Christ which is his church. Such a conviction does not, to be sure, solve all problems of ecumenical ecclesiology, but it does mean that the descriptive term "brethren" is theologically accurate and not just tactically appropriate.

Pope John's ability to take the lead so that others would follow was also manifest in his concern particularly as expressed through the Council, for *aggiornamento*, for bringing the church "up to date." It was a small thing, no doubt, to remove the phrase usually translated "perfidious Jews" from the Good Friday Mass. But few things serve better to symbolize both Pope John's sensitivity to his fellow men and his desire that the church should move away from past controversies into a new kind of relationship with all non-Catholics. There is no end to the sort of thing such an attitude might mean for the Roman Catholicism of the future. Even now it means that issues only quietly mentioned in the past can be openly discussed, and it means also that as a result the last remnants of the "monolith" image of Roman Catholicism are being shattered. The winds of change are at work in contemporary Roman Catholicism, and no Catholic should fear the acknowledgement of this fact, for the winds are clearly the breath of the Holy Spirit.

ONE FEELS, indeed, that the Holy Spirit was breathing upon Pope John's pontificate from the very beginning. I have often remarked somewhat facetiously that one of the most signal instances of the reality of the Holy Spirit has been the totally unexpected direction of Pope John's pontificate from the very beginning. Certainly the Cardinals in their human wisdom had no idea what sort of Pope they were electing back in 1958, and there are even those unkind enough to suggest that had they known, they might have looked elsewhere than to Giuseppe Roncalli. But the Holy Spirit, making use as He always does of whatever men offer up to Him, has been able to do with the election of Giuseppe Roncalli more than could ever have entered the mind of man to conceive. So as I survey the years since his election, I feel constrained to say again that his election is a signal instance of the reality of the Holy Spirit. But I no longer say it facetiously.

The same point—the difference between expectation and result—has been put in less theological terms by those who assumed that Pope John was elected as a kind of interim appointment, a "caretaker pope" who would keep the house in order for a few years until the church determined more clearly what its future direction should be. "Caretaker pope?" the reaction has gone, "Caretaker pope, indeed. He has taken more care of the church in four years than has been done by anybody else in four centuries."

The kind of care that was taken of the church will be documented by the historians, although they will be less able to evaluate the intangibles the above paragraphs have discussed. But there are certain external events as well for which Pope John will be remembered, of which three in particular are notable. One of these was the very calling of the Council, an act which showed that the church was in earnest about a critical self-examination. The other two are the encyclicals *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*. The former brought up to date the emphases of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* in the social realm, and was itself an example of *aggiornamento* (the ecclesiastical Latinists had to invent a word for "television"). The latter encyclical, dealing with problems of world peace, had the added virtue of being the first papal encyclical addressed not only to Roman Catholics but to "all men of good will," and stands as yet another symbol of Pope John's concern to reach out toward all members of the human family.

Pope John beckoned the Catholic Church to move out toward the separated brethren as far as she could, in fidelity to her own convictions, and to engage in that renewal which is always the church's task, and the task in which Christendom is always most loath to engage. It is therefore the prayer of Catholics and non-Catholics alike that the concerns of Pope John, so manifest in the first session of Vatican Council II, will be brought to fruition when the Council reconvenes under the order of Pope John's successor. The completion by his fellow bishops of that which he initiated will be the most signal

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mark of honor his own church can bestow upon him.

So we non-Catholics share with our Roman Catholic brethren in their sorrow, for it is also our sorrow. And it is assuaged only by the recognition that the forces Pope John unleashed within his brief pontificate will be the dominant forces in the future of the church he served, as the influence and impact of this man of God are extended across the weeks, months, years and centuries in which his name will be accorded reverence and honor, and will be uttered with love.

Report from Rome

A Gift of Holiness

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

SOMETHING STRANGE happened when Pope John died. It was the end of four days of terrible suffering, a long agony that surprised even the doctors. Some people wondered why he should suffer so much so long. Could it be the labyrinthine ways again? Or was it what the atheist Heinrich Heine had said once: "Death is nothing, but dying is a disgusting invention"? Others nodded and called it a sign of God's punishment for the Pope's contacts with the Anti-Christ, with Communists and other enemies of the Church.

Pope John died as he undoubtedly desired, with the crowd he loved so dearly under his windows close to him and praying for him, as night closed in on a long beautiful day. When the crowd finally departed, many had the impression that something had been accomplished, but "darkly as in a mirror"—something we are still unable to understand, but which we may understand later.

Pope John's body was brought to St. Peter's to lie there in state, according to the tradition. Those who wished to see him a last time had two days and one night to do so. The throng that poured into the Vatican to see the Pope was something not even his staunchest supporters and admirers had foreseen. At 2 A.M. the crowd was still so thick that it took an hour and a half to reach the bier. When the heavy doors of St. Peter's were closed at the end of the second day, more than half a million people had seen the Pope and tens of thousands were still crowding the square, unable to get in. And Pope John's body was covered with small bunches of flowers of all kinds, thrown over him by the visitors. The oldtimers in the Vatican had not seen anything like it, and there was no record of anything like it during the last century either.

Italians and particularly Romans have a way of dealing with papal deaths and elections that often strikes foreigners as slightly cynical. But this time there was no trace of it. Pope John was "different." He seemed to have stirred something deep in the souls of ordinary people, something they seemed to be longing for, perhaps without even knowing it. People were heard to ask themselves: What could it have been?

There is no doubt about the reply. What the people found in Pope John was simply holiness. Wherever we suspect holiness, we seem to be attracted irresistibly. And in our age this thirst for holiness seems to be greater than ever. Men or women who through their example keep us from despair do not realize, perhaps, how important they are to the ordinary people. In Pope John the people sensed this magic quality and just rushed to him, clinging to him even after death. It had nothing to do with the primitive manifestations of popular piety so common in the Latin countries, where holiness has undergone a sort of inflation from the overuse, or even misuse, of the word.

It was a shock that affected people who normally are not concerned with religion, including the Communists. As Pope John was suffering his long agony, an Italian Communist paper wrote that Communists cannot officially say that they pray for somebody, but they wished however to make it clear that in this critical hour they were as close to him as they could be.

IS HOLINESS a spiritual inheritance? The question may sound awkward. And yet it seems as if a man or a woman who has that quality gathers around him or her spiritual sons and daughters who in turn transmit it to others. It is as if it was a hidden force following mysterious channels, and many examples could be cited.

In the case of Pope John it was not only the fact that he was born in one of these families where faith is as natural as the air they breathe and where vocations mature among the numerous children like fruit on a tree, but also that he was the spiritual son of a

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN is The Commonweal's regular correspondent in Rome.

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holy man, the former bishop of his native Diocese of Bergamo, Radini-Tedeschi. Again and again Pope John refers to this spiritual father, who seems to have been very much like himself, a man fifty years ahead of his time and gifted with that Franciscan spirit which is so typically Italian, yet which has nothing to do with what is traditionally understood by the Vatican in general and by the prelates of the Roman Curia in particular.

Both these men seem to have been gifted with this rare combination of worldly cleverness and skill on one hand and warm spiritual life on the other, or in other words, to be at the same time "cunning like vipers and innocent like doves." Both were born pastors, born bishops of their flock and it is not a coincidence that the opening of the Ecumenical Council turned out to be the great day for the bishops at the expense of the centralized organization that the Roman Curia has been ever since the Reformation.

The last message Pope John released—and this too seems to be a strange coincidence—was directed to the Polish miners of Piekary Slaski, the famous sanctuary in the middle of one of the biggest industrial districts of eastern Europe, a sanctuary which has not only survived Communism, but is more important than ever. It is probable that in no other industrial district in the West have the workers remained more deeply religious, and in no other place within the Communist world has Communism proved more powerless against religion. Piekary Slaski is a symbol and ought to be studied carefully by both Communists and Catholics alike from a sociological point of view, for it may reveal much for the future. With his worldly skill and spiritual intuition Pope John realized this. His message to the miners was recorded a few days before his last relapse and the miners were able to hear his friendly voice in Poland at the very time that he was dying in Vatican City.

Is there anybody among the cardinals who is able to collect the bequest he has left? Most people in Rome think that there is none, however able and spiritually prepared several of the *papabili* are. And quite independently of the speculations about who has the best prospects and what will be the future of the Council, it is more and more felt here that whoever is elected, whatever his personal intentions or his obligations towards those who have voted for him, will be carried along by the landslide Pope John has provoked.

However, the forces ready to try to stop it are there and they are far from negligible. An oldtimer, one of the Cardinals of the Curia, made a statement a few hours after Pope John's death that circulated quickly throughout Rome. It will take more than 50 years, he said, to repair the havoc wrought to the Church by John XXIII in four years.

Two Great Encyclicals

Break with the Past

MICHAEL NOVAK

PHILOSOPHICALLY speaking, Pope John's two great encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris,* have two major achievements to their credit. On the one hand, they have by-passed Latin Scholasticism and returned for their central inspiration to a more authentic philosophic tradition of the Church. On the other hand, they have moved the philosophical attitude of the Church in the same direction as that in which Anglo-American philosophy seems to be moving, making these two philosophies peculiarly relevant to each other. Both of these achievements are of serious historical importance.

Less than a century ago, studying in Rome, John Henry Newman was appalled at the state of Latin Scholasticism. Pope Leo XIII was likewise distressed; he called for a serious philosophical reform within the Church, insisting that the sources be studied anew. The great tragedy of the Catholic philosophy of the time was that it did not even understand its own tradition. Memorized definitions and logical manipulations had replaced authentic philosophy; scandalously inept textbooks had replaced both the source books and creative work. The secular philosophic world held in polite contempt what Maritain has called "the seven centuries of Catholic laziness." It is impossible to understand the significance of Pope John's *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris* without adverting to the reform begun in Catholicism by Leo XIII some eighty years ago. That yeast oper-

MICHAEL NOVAK, a frequent contributor, is the author of *The Tiber Was Silver.*

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ated all the years that Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was growing to the fulness of his vocation.

Because of this long ambiguity within the Catholic tradition it has been difficult to describe the conflicting philosophical attitudes at the Second Vatican Council. Those who are called traditionalists or conservatives generally profess allegiance to the Latin Scholastic tradition, particularly as it was expressed after Trent and taught in the Roman universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Those who are called reformers, or liberals, or of the open-door school, are generally those whose ultimate allegiance is to the earlier tradition of the Church: to Scripture, to the historical study of the Fathers (Greek as well as Latin), and to the liturgical life of the early Church. Pope John chose for his own view the description "pastoral." That this designation was not meant to be opposed to "theological," "intellectual," or "scientific" may be grasped from the fact that the reforming party at the Council drew its strength precisely from the most prolific writers, scholars, and theoreticians in the present Church.

BUT POPE JOHN's program, like the Council's thus far, was different in style from Latin Scholasticism; and the differences are hard to characterize in a single descriptive phrase. Understandably, those accustomed to viewing the world in the manner of Latin Scholastics are outraged at having their viewpoint about "the essence" of things seriously impugned; it is difficult for them to believe they have been wrong, or even only half wrong. It is even difficult for them to accept the possibility of another point of view than their own. Are they not *Romani*? Are they not—yes, even—the Church? But whatever their glories, and in spite of their contrary assumption, the Latin Scholastics cannot claim Aquinas as their mentor; they cannot claim the world-view, only the words, of Aristotle.

The emphasis which Aristotle places on the individual person in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, and the emphasis he places on historical development and "what is" rather than "what ought to be" in his *Politics*, are clearly present in Pope John's encyclicals; they are not present in the moral handbooks of the Latin Scholastics. Aristotle (and Aquinas after him) refused to turn ethics into a logical or legal system, and insisted on the element of risk in moral decision; the Latin Scholastics coalesce ethics and canon law, and minimize risk and individuality.

Aquinas for his part, as Father Eric D'Arcy's *Conscience and its Right to Freedom* has recently shown, had all the reasons of the Gospels for insisting more than Aristotle on the equality and dignity of all men, not only of philosophers. The Christian tradition, not the Greek, elaborated the notion of conscience, and Aquinas benefited by that elaboration. The doctrine of human rights is more highly developed in Aquinas than, for example, Reinhold Niebuhr in a recent note in *Christianity and Crisis* on *Pacem in Terris* intimates, but it was not quite complete, except in principle, and it is, to modern eyes, inconsistently applied. The political writings of Jacques Maritain on the person and the common good, however, which cohere almost to the letter with Pope John's encyclicals, derive from reflection on the methods and principles of Aristotle and Aquinas. Thus Pope John's way to the Church's ancient tradition was made straight by contemporary philosophic labors; in *Mater et Magistra* he states explicitly that the Holy See's social doctrine was clarified "with the cooperation of enlightened priests and laymen, especially during the last century."

JUST HOW far Pope John's way was cleared by the twentieth-century Catholic renaissance becomes apparent in the essays collected by Justus George Lawler and Joseph N. Moody in *The Challenge of Mater et Magistra* (Herder, $4.95). In the lead essay of over one hundred pages, Franz H. Mueller sketches the modern history of "The Church and the Social Question," amassing data and references which should stimulate American studies. The essay is especially interesting because its vocabulary and style are highly Scholastic, but in the German, not the Latin, manner. The Germanic orientation toward the realities of social and political life make Latin words, whose connotations have long been essentialistic and static, do the work in history for which they were first fashioned.

In the second essay, "The World-wide Response," Father Donald R. Campion, S.J., compiles a fascinating report on nearly two-hundred studies which tried to interpret the revolutionary impact of *Mater et Magistra*. The energy of these comments and the range of their disagreements indicate the ferment and restlessness at the grassroots which the Vatican Council has crystallized for the public gaze. In other essays on human solidarity, demography, agriculture, work, and government planning, Joseph N. Moody, Thomas K. Burch, Edward W. O'Rourke, John C. Cort, and Richard E. Mulcahy, S.J., respectively, apply the thinking of Pope John to the American situation. Each paper is competent, direct, knowledgeable. But it becomes apparent that the work of these men is new in America; the public has not been prepared for Pope John's imperatives.

The American Catholic people in general seem still to be living in the world of Latin Scholasticism; they leave initiative to their clergy, attend their devotions and private duties, and are unaware of Christian imperatives toward "the reconstruction of the social order." Father Campion cites a Roman visitor to America after the publication of *Mater et Magistra* who noted that, on the American Catholic scene, "the challenge to papal authority in social matters" comes not from the left but

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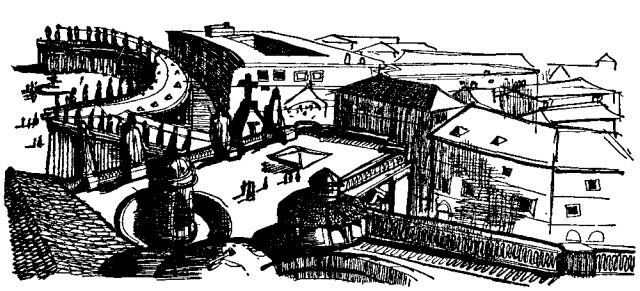
from the right. But then, American pulpits have been largely silent about the social encyclicals of Leo XIII, Pius XI, and the messages of Pius XII. Thus it is no wonder that the American secular community regards American Catholics as politically and socially selfish and unenlightened.

This same secular community, on the other hand, recognized the selflessness and moral leadership of Pope John. The New York *Times* outdid itself in praising him and supporting him. Why can secular thinkers understand what he is saying? Pope John's "fundamental principle" is that "individual human beings are and should be the foundation, the end and the subjects of all the institutions in which social life is carried on." The Pope affirmed that this principle "guarantees the sacred dignity of the individual"; at the same time he insisted that human beings are by their nature "intrinsically social." He reconciled both longings of men: for personal dignity and for community. The Pope was at one and the same time a twentieth-century man, and a man steeped in the best traditions of the West: traditions which belong, ultimately, to the entire race.

This is why Pope John could address all men of good will, and be relevant to their deepest concerns. In the Anglo-American world, for example, several important philosophers are moving away from the simpler forms of utilitarian ethics, toward a new emphasis upon the uniqueness of the human person. They could easily support the Pope's "fundamental principle." In a textbook widely used on secular campuses, for instance, Richard B. Brandt defends an analysis of ethical terms and a method for resolving ethical disputes, the "Qualified Attitude Method," which is very close to Aristotle's conception of prudence—far closer than Latin Scholastic manuals generally are.

But the most important move in the Anglo-American tradition in this connection is that taken by John Rawls in his often-cited article, "Justice as Fairness." Professor Rawls, who lectures in ethics at Harvard, objects to utilitarianism because it takes the stance in ethics of the executive-administrator, and does not sufficiently respect the personal factors in ethical decisions. He argues that to represent our ethical convictions accurately, at least one new premise must be added to classical utilitarianism; viz., that no one may justify an inequality simply because the disadvantages of those on one side are outweighed by the advantages of those on the other. This premise rules out mere technical calculations, and insists on personal dignity. Rawls follows Aristotle in taking the equal rights of persons as the basis of fairness, and in taking fairness rather than utilitarian calculation as basic to the conception of justice. If this move by Rawls is widely accepted, British empiricism will have taken a major step toward a conception of the person shared by Pope John.



IF Anglo-American philosophy is moving toward an existential conception of natural law, based on the conditions which any person must meet in order to justify his ethical judgments, Pope John helped restore to Catholic teaching on natural law its similar emphasis on the integrity of the judgment of the individual person in his historical situation. In *Pacem in Terris,* he upheld the right of each man to worship God "according to the dictates of an upright conscience." He made perfectly explicit later in the encyclical (against certain Scholastics) that "error" does not deprive a person of his rights or of his dignity. Again, the Pope stressed the heightened consciousness which men in our times have of their rights; this evolution of consciousness, he argued, at last makes effective a morality of human equality. Finally, in the passage on cooperation of Catholics with non-Catholics, the Pope instructed Catholics to distinguish "philosophic teachings" from "historical movements." He thus brought the secret of Anglo-American political cooperation into the teaching of the Church universal.

Pope John's moral perspective, therefore, was not abstract, essentialistic, utopian. It is historical and concrete. It calls to mind, in many points of methodology and emphasis, the viewpoint of Maritain's *True Humanism,* which is too little read by Anglo-American philosophers. In its emphasis on historical existence and the individual person, Pope John's viewpoint was a decisive break with Latin Scholasticism. Where the Pope emphasizes persons, the Latin Scholastic emphasizes ideological position. Where the Pope emphasizes the evolution of political and social consciousness, the Latin Scholastic emphasizes eternal definitions. Pope John was a political realist in the tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas; he was neither an idealist of eternal forms nor a pragmatist of immediate expedience. His vision was too compromising for the former and too futuristic for the latter.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that in these two major encyclicals Pope John poured his new wine into old skins: his moral vision strained the Scholastic terminology he used, rupturing it in places, held back by it in others. He still used the image of a law "written on the hearts" of men, though Dom Odon Lottin has shown that this image, far from being Aquinan, belongs to the Platonic tradition against which Aquinas labored. The Pope is fond of traditional phrases like "principles

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which are universal, absolute, and unchangeable," even in contexts in which he has been arguing that men have come only gradually to consciousness of many of their rights. There is thus a marked tension in these encyclicals between the static and the dynamic, the essentialistic and the historical.

This tension is indicative of the struggle still going on within the Church. Pope John has introduced the victories won by Emmanuel Mounier, Maritain, Gabriel Marcel, Teilhard de Chardin, Lonergan and others, into the most authoritative ordinary teaching of the Church. But these victories were won while many in high posts and low remained in the eternal, absolute, unchanging fortresses of Latin Scholasticism. To make himself understood, Pope John seemed to use the familiar forms, the familiar words, though his vision was not Scholastic. On the other hand, his vision had deep roots in the existential, historical Aristotelian tradition, in the Aristotle of the *Ethics* and the *Politics*.

Thus it is self-defeating to turn the modern polemic against Scholasticism into an attack on the Western philosophical tradition, as the advocates of modern Scripture studies and liturgical reform are wont to do. The use of the words "kerygmatic," "Hebrew rather than Greek," and even Pope John's "pastoral," are in a way evasions. They are obviously and explicitly directed against the viewpoint of Latin Scholasticism, which is abstract, categorical, unhistorical, impersonal. But to those in the Scholastic fortresses, this polemic cannot fail to seem like a betrayal of tradition, an abandonment of sound philosophy. Moreover, insofar as it is merely a reaction, this polemic alienates and does not reconcile. The Scholastic must be shown that modern theology is not a surrender to the existentialist, romantic *Zeitgeist*. On the contrary, he must be shown that it is he who is standing far outside the authentic tradition, high and dry on a platonic island, out of the stream of the Church's life.

BUT THE question that seems to worry the conservative is how he—and the Church with him—can have been wrong for so many years. Can the infallible Church have been unfaithful to herself? One can sympathize very well with the sense of panic and loss the Latin Scholastics seem to feel as the waves of history erode their island; won't the Church disappear, indistinguishable from secular currents? This fear is at the root of the condemnation of Modernism and the recent innuendoes of heresy against the new theology. The "closed door" school wants dikes against the floods, to preserve the identity of the Church.

Moreover, the reformers do not seem to realize the gravity of the changes they are bringing about. Whereas, before, the words "eternal, absolute, unchanging" gave security and one had only to turn to the Curia for a clarification, now it is becoming impossible to take anything for granted. Attitudes towards Protestants, Jews, Orthodox, and most recently the Communists, have been revolutionized. There has not been, of course, any compromise "in principle." But is this saving phrase any more than rhetoric? Has not the Church in fact and in the presence of actual men given up her pretensions to unchanging spiritual authority? Such a fear is founded on an inadequate philosophical base for thinking about the Church.

Between the compromises of pragmatism and the rigidity of eternal truth the conservatives do not see the Aristotelian realistic synthesis. Furthermore, it is exactly these two alternatives between which their own teaching and practice oscillate. There is nothing more striking about Latin Scholasticism than its doctrine of "prudence," by whose rubric it is often ruthless and unscrupulous in action, while professing eternal values untarnished by the claims of the human situation. Latin politics work by the same dichotomy; the Latin will die to proclaim eternal truths, whose abuse in practice he tolerates with a shrug.

The "eternal truths" of which Pope John speaks are not the sort that are written as definitions "beyond the firmament." They are, rather, the sort of verity William Faulkner spoke of in his memorable acceptance speech on receiving the Nobel prize: founded not in definitions but in that physical and emotional and only partly rational organism: man in history. Ambition and lust, love and sacrifice, pride and passion recur because man cannot escape his origin, limitations, or history. It is in this sense only that there is a "natural law," progressively made clear in history, never quite complete, always affected by the continuing dialogue between God and his people down the generations. Thus Pope John's list of natural rights was not evident, in theory or in practice, when the Gospels were first preached, nor, indeed, in the thirteenth or even in the nineteenth century.

Thus the use of the words "absolute," "unchanging," "eternal," must be taken in a limited, special sense. From God's point of view, man's nature may lie limpid and apparent, and Revelation may help to fix some of these insights for finite men. But from an empirical human point of view, men learn the natural law only gradually and according to the lessons of history. Pope John succeeded in returning the Church to this ancient perspective. Against the advice of the "prophets of doom," he returned Catholicism to the world. He cast the Church free from the island of Latin Scholasticism on which she has for some centuries been marooned, and launched her once more on the currents of human history with hope, with courage, with joy, with the exhilaration proper to those who see in the darkness the star of eternal life. So doing, he made it possible for Catholics to speak of good news to their companions who do not see, and to learn from those who do not see the humility of the human situation.

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THE STAGE

What Keeps Us Going

THIS IS the time of year for recapitulation, but since in the present age of the theater one season's summary is entirely interchangeable with another's, there is very little point in making one. From year to year the same sickness works at the root of everything; the same incompetence, vulgarity, pretension, mendacity and cowardice are on exhibit; and the same few exceptions keep us from giving up in absolute despair. That is to say, the same kinds of exceptions every year: plays or spectacles which against the tide and in crafty isolation —or fortuitous centrality, the "hit" that turns out to be art—possess their souls and are given adequate bodies to contain them.

Do we really have to say once again that the theater is only alive today when it is being brash, irreverent (or imaginatively reverent), disturbing, antic, dangerous and even cruel? When it introduces cracks in the glacier of our public images and private fantasies? When it manages to leave off being a rear-view mirror? When it fills the air with rain, hailstones and flying objects instead of with fog or weak sunshine? It seems that we do have to keep saying it, over and over; saying it, telling the truth about the theater's shame and boredom and death is very nearly the central activity and radical justification for a journalist-critic of drama in our time.

No doubt there are certain critics who enjoy being employed in this way, who like playing at policeman, internist or Jeremiah, holding the hand palm out, analyzing tumors, uttering "No!" in thunder forever, secure in the knowledge that there is never going to be a shortage of objects to thunder at, having only to keep their voices in good fighting trim. Well, it would really not be bearable, lacking this sort of temperament, unless one saw the profession, as some of us continue to do, as a service to one's public, whatever that is; a public which cannot know the truth unaided but which knows as well as oneself what to do with it when it is made clear. Even more sustaining, we see it, in all modesty, as a service to dramatic art, to the preservation of a hope for culture through the preservation of standards; resistance to the gross and the deceitful at least holds the way open for the shapely and the true.

And yet even so it would not be endurable to be a drama critic in these days if it were not for the exceptions, the accidents, sudden, unaccountable, miraculous in their power to renew hope and restore perspective. There seems to be a fixed number of them every season, no more than four or five, as though hope were meant to exist within a narrow, unchanging strip of territory, a running track around the central reservoir of theatrical staleness, lies and corrupt gestures.

And so, a recapitulation after all: this season's exceptions, the works that kept the drama as an art, or even as an act of intelligence, from dying out entirely. "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf," "The Pinter Plays," "Beyond the Fringe," "The Brig," and the revival of "Six Characters in Search of an Author." I said four or five, but perhaps "The Days and Nights of Beebee Fenstermaker" can be added, though it was flawed and uncertain of itself. And the two terribly inadequate productions of Brecht's "A Man's a Man" might have given someone hope of something better in the same line. But from the other 150-odd productions there was only silence, or, what is much worse, noise. RICHARD GILMAN

THE SCREEN

Who Is Sylvia?

LAST MONTH Paramount publicized "Hud" with a teaser campaign that asked simply, "Why 'Hud'"? It was a silly and almost dangerous (for them) slogan. Too many people may have wondered, why, indeed, "Hud"? But fortunately "Hud" turned out to be a good movie and didn't need any slick tricks to put it over. If less worthy movies were to adopt this slogan, however, moviegoers may really wonder why. As I am wondering now, why "Irma La Douce"?

On the stage "Irma La Douce" was a light, breezy, sometimes naughty musical comedy about a Parisian *poule* and the men in her life, especially the law student who became her lover, objected to her prostitution, and disguised himself as a rich patron who visited her and thus kept away her regular customers. Irma, clad throughout the show in black tights, was the only girl in a cast of men; and the whole thing, in spite of the indelicate story, was a whimsical fantasy put over by its lively song-and-dance youngsters, who seemed to be having a hilarious time.

It's hard to figure out why producer-director Billy Wilder thought this stage spoof should be made into a straight and often realistic film comedy. Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond changed Alexandre Breffort's stage play considerably in writing the movie script, and they used Marguerite Monnot's pleasant score mostly as background music. The result is a sometimes funny and often vulgar comedy in which Irma is only one of several prostitutes whose business, and pimps (called mecs), and customers provide the main source of the jokes.

In the title role, as Irma the Sweet One, Shirley MacLaine mixes whimsy with practicality, but never really wins her audience. As her lover, Jack Lemmon, fired from the police force for staging an unauthorized raid, struggles manfully to divide his time between Irma

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and an early morning job to get the money to pose as a rich Englishman. His handling of the dual roles and the dual situations is rather amusing. But the funniest member of the cast is Lou Jacobi as the bistro owner who seems to know all the answers and delights in running and commenting on everyone's affairs. No doubt the original, fantastic "Irma" was doomed by cinema's realism; but in any case it wasn't helped by this straining, lengthy, over-blown production.

WHILE we're in the "Why?" mood, we may certainly wonder why about "In the Cool of the Day." I didn't read the Susan Ertz novel from which it stems, but it couldn't have been this bad; and if it was, why on earth did a good producer like John Houseman bother with it? It tells the story of two unhappily married couples; and, after a great deal of finagling, it finally gets the neurotic wife (Jane Fonda) of one couple in bed with the hard-working, misunderstood husband (Peter Finch) of the other. Jane's husband (Arthur Hill) does not get together with Peter's even more neurotic wife (Angela Lansbury). None of this is believable—but the scenery is. The exquisite shots of Greece almost make this tripe worth a taste, but not quite.

THE FINE shots of London in "I Could Go on Singing" are helpful in selling it as soap opera, but scenery really isn't enough to put over a movie. The why of this film is Judy Garland who portrays a world-famous singer who hopes while she is in London to win the teenage son she hasn't seen since he was a baby. This is a *Stella Dallas* kind of tear-jerker, and it may very well jerk some tears from women. Men may find the whole thing rather tedious, especially since Judy is not at her best. She is interesting in several highly emotional scenes; and in her appearances at the Palladium, she shows she can belt out a song with the best of 'em. Dirk Bogarde plays the boy's dignified father with reserve; and Gregory Phillips is fine as the boy who finally learns that this singing idol is his mother. But the three-handkerchief picture runs on forever. It does prove one thing, however—that the English too can make soap operas which, for all their good casting and fine Eastmancolor scenery, are no better than daytime TV serials.

WHILE ONE may wonder why producer Jerry Wald chose to make a movie of William Inge's unsuccessful stage play, "A Loss of Roses," one has to admit that the film, "The Stripper" is better than the original. In its way, it is a soap opera too, but done with enough tough realism under Franklin Schaffner's direction to make one forget its soapy qualities. It now tells the story of a tired, second-rate entertainer (Joanne Woodward) who is stranded by her lover-manager (Robert Webber) in the small Kansas town she remembers from her childhood. Befriended by a former friend, now a widow (Claire Trevor), the insecure dancer drifts into a love affair with the widow's son (Richard Beymer), a boy so mama-mufflered and confused that he's ready to turn down his steady date (Carol Lynley) for the flashy woman of the world.

The story gets rather grim, but it manages to hold one's interest. The acting is good throughout, and the small-town atmosphere is done perfectly. "The Stripper" (which is badly named, as the long-suffering woman so well played by Miss Woodward isn't really a stripper at all, except in one raucous scene that shatters her dignity) shows that it is possible for a movie to improve on sleazy material. This film is by no means a world-beater, but its dramatic and poignant moments are absorbing. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

CORRESPONDENCE

"An Immense Task"

Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITORS: My respect for The Commonweal takes precedence over my natural reluctance to write letters to the editor and obliges me to comment on your editorial, "An Immense Task" in the May 10 issue. My complaint is based not on the writer's belief that United States nuclear superiority is the only guarantee of world peace (such as it is)—The Commonweal is entitled to hold whatever opinions it desires—but rather on the misinformation that lies at the base of the assumptions.

First: the United States does not have "just-superior" forces, as the editorial states, but rather an extraordinary preponderance over the Soviet Union. When the present nuclear program is completed in 1965 the United States will have nearly 2,000 ICBM's compared to 75 for the Soviet Union.

Second: there is simply no evidence for the assertion this is "a superiority which the Soviet Union is determined to nullify." During the period 1958-60, when the Soviets could have built hundreds of intercontinental bombers to balance the 1,000 B-47's and over 600 B-58's we built, they chose to build less than 200, and there are no indications they are planning to build more. The so-called "missile gap", which President Kennedy exploited so adroitly in the 1960 campaign, was long ago revealed to be a fabrication of the Air Force and the missile lobbyists. According to the CIA, the Soviets have built less than five per cent of the missile force which is within their capacity, and there is no dispute over the fact that they are building a finite deterrent force based on a relatively small number of invulnerable missiles rather than trying to match the United States in a game of counterforce profusion.

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Third: if you find the idea of nuclear stalemate "a very dangerous one," tell the Secretary of Defense, who in January 1963 told the House Armed Services Committee that we are entering such a condition whether we like it or not: "We are approaching an era when it will become increasingly improbable that either side could destroy a sufficiently large portion of the other's strategic nuclear force, either by surprise or otherwise, to preclude a devastating retaliatory blow. . . Even if we were to double or triple our forces we would not be able to destroy quickly all or almost all of the hardened (Soviet) ICBM sites."

The problems of survival in the nuclear age are extremely complicated, and The Commonweal has been brave and forthright in facing these problems without cant and without preconceptions. It is for this reason that it should continue its reputation for independent thinking by not repeating the tired clichés of a strategic position which even the Secretary of Defense has admitted is no longer valid. Rather than defending General Taylor's interpretation of counterforce, The Commonweal could serve its readers better by exploring the implications of our remarkable nuclear over-capacity and by pondering these words written by so conservative a journalist as Hanson Baldwin less than a year ago: "What is not clear is exactly what our strategic concept is. When is enough enough? Some 1,200 bombers, 1,200 land-based ICBMs, and 656 submarine-launched missiles—each capable of destroying a city—seem to add up to a nuclear 'overkill' capacity, not a finite deterrent. The President speaks of a second-strike capability, yet behind the scenes the advocates of 'pre-emptive strike' are still strong."

RONALD STEEL

Brooklyn, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: It is hard for me to distinguish between the policy The Commonweal editors advocate in their May 10 issue. ["An Immense Task"] and the continuation of the arms race.

I am not, of course, questioning the depth and strength of your hope that such a policy will eventually bring us solid peace. But, as I understand it, an integral part of this policy is to resort to the use of nuclear weapons if negotiations should fail.

Our insistence on maintaining a superiority of nuclear defenses, however flexible these defenses may be, can only serve to intensify not only the Soviet Union's suspicions of our intentions, but those of the non-nuclear nations also.

Even now the method of disarmament is proving to be a prickly topic for both sides. More "dynamic progress and flexible adaptation in meeting the changing requirements for superiority in the strategic nuclear field" may, or may not, counteract what General Taylor calls "the nuclear stalemate mentality." With all due respect to the General's sincerity and humaneness, what it will not do is serve a peace mentality. One need not argue that those who seek peace by entirely peaceful means have been vindicated by *Pacem in Terris* to believe that their position has been greatly enhanced. How can "dynamic progress" in nuclear arms constitute peaceful means?

It is true that your lead editorial on *Pacem in Terris* in the April 26 issue singled out the statement "it is hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as an instrument of justice" to raise the question as to whether the just-war doctrine can be reconciled with the teaching of the encyclical. I think that the sentence which immediately follows sheds sufficient light on one aspect of the Pope's thinking: ". . . the law of fear still reigns among peoples and it forces them to spend fabulous sums for armaments: not for aggression, they affirm—and there is no reason for not believing them, but to dissuade others from aggression." Does not this statement show that in the Pope's opinion neither side can claim moral superiority when it becomes a question of armaments?

How can we use words such as "flexibility," "dynamic progress," "defense," when speaking of nuclear weapons and not run the danger of inviting semantic confusion? It seems that, as a rule, Catholics do not consider Pope Pius' warning that "should the evil consequences of adopting this method of warfare become so extensive as

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to pass entirely beyond the control of men, then indeed its use must be rejected as immoral" as a statement which applies to defense as well as to aggression.

Just as pertinent is Pope John's warning that the process of reversing the trend of the arms race and achieving disarmament must be "complete and thorough" and proceed "from inner conviction." As far as I know the Church in this country (and most probably the world over) does not stress enough the rights of conscience as against those of authority when it comes to the individual citizen's service in war. Other highly important and until now rather neglected questions such as interfaith dialogue, racial justice, family limitation and intellectual freedom are getting an airing. But too many of us still believe that if our country had to go to war, next month or next year, we as citizens and as a nation would be absolved from all blame in supporting this war fully, whatever its strategy became. Perhaps we would believe it largely because we had not been taught differently.

Who else beside Thomas Merton, *Catholic Worker* writers and a comparative handful of other Catholics in the Church have unequivocally stated that with the advent of nuclear weapons a definite qualitative difference has entered into war? Only these people constantly stress that war itself and not the threat of Communist expansion is *the* greatest evil and possibility on the international scene.

We need some inspiration to reflect on Christ's words and actions when Peter struck off Malchus' ear and to let such inspiration influence our action—in detail if necessary.

ROLAND LAIRD

"Student Freedom"

Valparaiso, Ind.

TO THE EDITORS: This is probably a curious letter—a defense of the administration of a Roman Catholic institution by a Lutheran. I should like to refer to your editorial "Student Freedom" in your issue of May 31.

For more than two decades I have been in substantial agreement with The Commonweal in its cool, thoughtful approach to the common problems of Roman and non-Roman Christendom. However, your editorial concerning the situation at Notre Dame struck, I believe, a singularly unhappy note. Let me say, first of all, that your polite bow to the achievements of Father Hesburgh (and Father Cavanaugh before him) is well merited. It could have been a little less polite and more profound, but that is another matter. As the administrator of the college nearest to the campus of Notre Dame and as a Protestant—even a Lutheran competitor—I can only agree most warmly with your seemingly reluctant tribute to Father Hesburgh and his colleagues in the administration of Notre Dame.

But why must you finally agree with the students and thus lay yourself open to the charge of succumbing to our pervasive and corrosive atmosphere of secularism? Let it be said squarely and honestly: In this entire controversy the students are wrong—even tragically wrong—and Father Hesburgh is right. Here is the outcropping on a Catholic campus of the heresy of freedom without responsibility. Father Hesburgh at Notre Dame did not fall back "on the solutions of the past." They pointed to the future when once more, please God, the ancient and honorable concepts of authority, liberty under God, admonition, education and even (Heaven help us) suppression will once more become a part of American higher education and will once more (Heaven bless us) restore the greatness of the university in the Christian tradition. Once the great virtue of obedience was central in Christian education, and it must return before we are completely true to our heritage. This is the ultimate focus of the conflict before us, and your editorial should not becloud the final issue.

The student body at Notre Dame, I know, is an excellent one. My own students have held conversations with their representatives, and we have learned how devoted, loyal and intelligent they really are. Just for this reason, however, they must not be permitted to become obsolescent in our post-modern world; they must not be allowed to mistake license for freedom or irresponsibility for maturity. The ends of the world have not come upon them alone; they have come upon all of us, and Father Hesburgh is right when he calls the witness of all the sacrificial years—at Notre Dame and elsewhere—to his side. This is the ultimate criterion—not what young men a little lost in our wasteland may say, but what the saints have actually done.

O. P. KRETZMANN
President, Valparaiso University

Letter to a Dutch Friend
(For Hans Memelink)

To bring the world into time with a word
Takes more than theology;
To make the scope of space a paradox
Where Achilles moves like wind but never wins
Reaches beyond astronomy:

Nine days upon the sea and I am home;
But I am where I have been, and my words
Have flown over oceans, bending the axis
Of the earth to their will, splitting the sky
With speeds unknown to wordless light; the stars
Stare in their sockets and read over your shoulder—

For see! I have already outstripped them: my thoughts
Rest safely inside you, beyond all paradox.

LARRY RUBIN

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Harry Levin: the Special Trajectory of the Novel

The Gates of Horn. By Harry Levin. Oxford University Press. $8.50.

by George Greene

THIS volume has grown slowly over a span of years. A preliminary statement on Stendhal appeared in 1945: "Toward Balzac" came two years later. Indeed about half of the material has been published earlier in periodicals. One is grateful, now, to have it lodged in one volume, for it invites thought not only about the area which it formally explores, but also about the present and future, if any, of the novel in modern society.

Mr. Levin focuses his attention on "the special trajectory of the novel, as it moves from the Napoleonic battlefields of Stendhal toward the insulated sick-room of Proust." Three intervening chapters address themselves to Balzac, Flaubert and Zola. The critic avoids theoretical impasses by conceiving of realism, not as a rigid doctrine, but rather as a dominant view of one's subject, an attitude geared to the criticism of society in terms of its daily sequence. There is no effort to minimize variance. "All five realists," Mr. Levin reminds us, "according to their respective lights, explicitly render an account of their day, and address themselves directly to posterity. . . ."

Nowhere has this writer's view of literature as a contribution to and as a reflection of institutional realities been more brilliantly exhibited than in his account of these iconoclasts. None of them, ironically, was ever elected to the French Academy. Jean Cocteau once allowed himself the quip that the French tradition was one of anarchy. Among other, more substantial victories, this book exposes the poverty of such a statement.

From past performances on subjects as diverse as Joyce, *Hamlet* and Marlowe, one is prepared for incisive textual criticism. Mr. Levin's ranging curiosity and formidable memory may well qualify him as that perfect reader of novels for whom Percy Lubbock was searching. But this critic succeeds at more than verbal probing. Zola spoke of Flaubert as a "poet cold-blooded enough to be clear-sighted," a view verified by Mr. Levin's close assessment.

Notwithstanding Flaubert's belief that his was a final stage of human development, and that nothing was worthy of devotion with the possible excepion of art, his very *taedium vitae* constituted a protest against the widening gap between artistic and public standards in his lifetime. What we observe—even in the exotic pages of *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*—is nothing less than the moral history of his generation. Too many readers have concentrated on the verbal rigorist who amassed 3600 pages of embryonic material for *Madame Bovary*. A greater heroism than is usually conceded vivified Flaubert's intransigence, an attitude not so much of impassive observation as of aggressive resistance to an environment. There was a measure of sainthood, we realize grudgingly, in one whose heroes were Spinoza and Voltaire.

In a later chapter Mr. Levin moves beyond the common image of Proust as spiteful dandy, the *homo unius libri*, to underline the sympathy between the Frenchman's attitude and that of another moralist long immured in his study, Hawthorne. It comes as a shock to read two sentences from Emerson which Proust included in a private letter. "This is the apparent life," says the first; and then: "The real life is underneath all this."

Proust's schoolmates invented a verb, to *proustifier*, denoting an atmosphere of extreme ceremony with which to clothe the simplest moment. This side of the man has been explored exhaustively. What confronts us with increasing vigor in Mr. Levin's essay is the extent to which Proust's odyssey led from the *Almanach de Gotha* to the Old Testament. That *patrie perdue* of which Marcel dreams is far closer to the religious tradition of Proust's Jewish mother. This admirer of Ruskin worked from the private and the psychological toward the social and the moral. Not without cause did Edith Wharton conclude: "The more we read of Proust, the more we see that his strength is the strength of tradition."

It is symptomatic of prevailing judgments (witness Eliot and Ortega y Gasset) that *The Gates of Horn* envisages a limited future for the novel of realism. But even Leon Trotsky, as Mr. Levin reminds us, "recognized that realism was never an unmixed element, and that symbolism constituted an important part of that intermixture." Malraux has long since given up the writing of novels, true enough. Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir seem too harassed by crises to rise above the level of pamphleteering.

Mr. Levin's store of comparative judgments, apt and stimulating, may justify yet another instance on our part. We note that *The Gates of Horn* is dedicated to Sir Charles Percy Snow and his wife. No one speaks more forcibly than Sir Charles for a return to that "reflective intelligence" which he feels has been diminished by the example of Joyce and—significantly—widened by Proust. "If I have to define it in pompous and abstract terms," Sir Charles has explained his theme, "I should say it was the power-relations of men in organized society." Sir Charles' is one contemporary program not unlike the consuming curiosities Mr. Levin so vividly evokes in his studies of Balzac and Zola.

May we not hope that we shall continue to find artists whose skills project a social setting which has been made real, in a story which employs a large cast, one, finally, which makes frank use of the commenting intelligence of the author? The problem, doubtless, remains one of personality. "You can't put a great soul into a commonplace person." D. H. Lawrence's judgment applies

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fully as well to men of letters as to their dramatis personae. Neither Bismarck nor the anti-Dreyfus forces could prevent the accumulation of those eighty-eight volumes of Zola manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale. One doubts that even our Cold War and ever more satanic weaponry will so paralyze as to totally stifle man's inclination to talk about himself—even if much of what he says sounds perilously close to *le tapage.*

Traps and Snares

The Pumpkin Eater. By Penelope Mortimer. McGraw-Hill. $4.95.

by Edwin Kennebeck

IN THE PARADE of handsome English literary ladies, Penelope Mortimer keeps pace with her nearest cousins: Iris Murdoch, the smooth enchantress with her metaphysical, that is to say inaccessible, Meanings; Elizabeth Taylor, maker of graceful, tender portraits; Muriel Spark, free-wheeling comic balladier. . . . Mrs. Mortimer's fourth novel, which follows a collection of short stories published the year before last, has some ingredients familiar to her readers, but it is a new and more ambitious attempt, and very good.

One of Mrs. Mortimer's novels is entitled *Bright Prison;* another is called, in this country, *Cave of Ice.* They mean: after you have got over expecting too much, dreaming too much, you can make yourself comfortable in your trap by coming to terms with it. The newest title continues the image, in its allusion to the woman whose husband kept her very well once he got her into his pumpkin shell.

In Mrs. Mortimer's stories the trap is usually marriage—more precisely, the marital choices people make. The husband-wife collisions are remarkably unhackneyed; the terror and remorse that parents feel about their children are freshly dismaying; the bond of love, or of mere commitment, that links them all is, in her best moments, implicitly invested with stirring awesomeness, even when she describes its violation.

More than once, abortion forms part of the violation in *Cave of Ice;* a woman rendered unable to protest by a lifetime of evasion, helps her unmarried daughter get rid of the child started by an Oxford undergraduate. The narrator of *The Pumpkin Eater,* married for thirteen years to her fourth husband, a wealthy film-writer, is having a breakdown but is slammed against reality when her unfaithful mate insists that she terminate a pregnancy. After all, she already has countless children (the number is never specified). It is time, he thinks, for her to put a limit to her expectations of the future. The woman tells us, "I only knew how to do one thing, to give myself away. Now there was nothing left to give . . . it is better to take life in neat steps and small sips than it is to believe, as I did, that there is a wealth which is perpetually renewed."

Even if there is such a wealth, it is now perpetually, totally threatened. The question of nuclear destruction comes up when a brash young reporter interviews her. Three times *she* asks *him,* "Do you think life's inevitable?" Her husband thinks so: "to Jake, living is necessarily defective, vicious, careless, an inevitable time of activity between two deaths." She comes to share his view: "If you're a Christian you can . . . put your affairs in order. . . . But if you're not, then you can either eat and drink and be merry or just . . . go on living with it." So, with hope cut off, she arrives at that mean and terrible pass: taking life for granted. She becomes useless, like the bits of wool her mother asked her to sort out when she was a child, just to keep busy.

The wife-and-mother tells her own story in a vivacious and self-pitiless tone, with the dreamlike humor that has flickered over much of Mrs. Mortimer's writing like blue flames over a charred log. (From her other books: a husband with boots "which he wore when talking to the gardener"; a servant who was "a Froebel-trained girl with a good complexion and a hard heart"; a vicar who "drove with the recklessness common to many clergymen, as though death were something to be met half-way." The culmination of Mrs. Mortimer's story derives fairly directly from the flesh and fabric of her characters and scenes and she makes incident become symbol by virtue of its reality. The abortion and sterilization which the wife permits under duress allow the continuation of her marriage—her life; and yet by this terrible gesture she ceases to be responsible for life. So the novel resounds like a cry of capitulation in the new polluted climate. The woman who lived in a shoe with all those children didn't know what to do; now she is tranquil in her pumpkin shell.

Fear of nuclear destruction offers many possibilities for thrillers of the *Fail-Safe* type; but on a serious level, except for the "Absurd" writers with their indirect shudders, no one has rendered successfully the influence of this interesting *donnée* on the texture of our existence. Mrs. Mortimer has settled for a sidelong glance at it, which is clear and chilling enough to hold us for a while.

Inner Visions

Sprightly Running: Part of an Autobiography. By John Wain. St. Martin's Press. $5.

by Brian Wilkie

THIS BOOK is a victim of its virtues. The first half has power, honesty, and beauty. Then, inexplicably, its *Lehrjahre* pattern suddenly disintegrates and the author begins to write editorials rather than real autobiography. At the end the reader almost feels defrauded.

The book purports to describe Wain's growth through 1960, when he reached the "appropriate" age of thirty-five, the middle of the journey. This suggestion of appropriateness, along with the sub-title of the book and the whole tenor of its early chapters, implies that the work will be a coherent tracing of a pattern of growth. And so it is for a long time. Through a magnificent series of emblematic experiences, Wain shows the harmful effects of his early years in turning him away from vital involvement with life. But after carefully leading us up to the crises

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which changed him, he suddenly drops the subject and launches into a series of more or less random personal essays on life and literature. Some of them are good, others garrulous and flat, but in any event they are only sketchily related to the original plan.

After establishing an intimate relationship with the reader, Wain suddenly turns off the confidences; after leading us into his dark wood, he leaves us to guess who or what played Virgil to his Dante, Wordsworth to his Mill. If such matters are none of our business, then this autobiography should have been written differently or else not published.

The defects of the book bulk large only because the first half is so good. Like many English authors from the provinces, Wain has an extraordinary ability to dramatize inner vision through setting. For example, he contrasts aggressive barbarism and gentle naturalness through his emblem of a rural valley despoiled by "the Sutton," a lower-class housing development. That frighteningly banal label gradually assumes the symbolic weight of all blind and stupid savagery everywhere.

And, even after reading countless attacks on the English school system, the reader will be chilled by Wain's serious portrait of it as modern totalitarianism in little. A totalitarian regime is simply "a school-world inhabited by adults . . . with everything scaled up accordingly—real guns instead of toy ones, real beatings and killings instead of token ones," but "the same atmosphere of treacheries and loyalties . . . the same naked lust to dominate."

Here, as in most of his other emblems derived from childhood, Wain makes us take seriously comparisons which might easily have seemed facile or precious; he does this through the intensity of his reactions to people, places, and events. Having been objectively convinced, though, we are more likely to be irritated by the casual boast which comes near the end of the book: "I am the sort of person who rushes headlong at life, collides with it, and gets hurt."

Wain's style, when it is not wasted on the kind of trivial gossip and literary theorizing which sometimes mar the later chapters, is a beautiful thing—relaxed, personal, yet clear and energetic. The portraits of such well- and half-known figures as C. S. Lewis (Wain's tutor at Oxford), Charles Williams, and the Dostoevskian E. H. W. Meyerstein, are lively, acute, and outspoken. (The later references to lesser figures are in questionable taste.) The description of the "great clearing house of Oxford," which Wain fell in love with, evokes a physical and psychological sense of the place which is better than anything I have read.

On the other hand, the discussions of literature versus criticism, of the United States, of press-agentry in modern letters, and of the stifling effect of programs on writers are uneven, too often superficial and stale. (What does it really mean for an author to "sell out"?) And occasionally Wain seems naive, especially in failing to recognize as commonplaces certain of his ideas and personal traits.

Near the end of this "autobiography," Wain declares that, although his book is not journalism, it is not art either. Perhaps this disclaimer should have come earlier, or perhaps the misleading subtitle should have been changed. But in fact the first part of the book *is* art, of a high order, as in the powerful passage where a solitary swan flying over Oxford becomes symbolic of Nature's final reality in contrast with man's limited though heroic achievement as represented by the buildings below. One wonders what happened to this artistry halfway through the book.

Mauriac's First

Young Man in Chains. By François Mauriac. Farrar, Straus & Co. $3.75.

by Michele Murray

THE BELATED appearance in English of Francois Mauriac's first novel, as the final volume of the collected edition, of his works gives us an opportunity to measure the distance he had to travel from this maiden effort to those books of his maturity which stand as his artistic testament. For, apart from its historical interest

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and its appeal to lovers of Mauriac who are curious about his beginnings, *Young Man in Chains* has little to recommend it.

Although Mauriac was in his late twenties when the book was published, it is a juvenile work, introducing many of the places, themes and character types which will reappear in later books only in rudimentary form, with merely the barest hint of the characteristic Mauriac atmosphere of sensual tension and brooding drama that informs his best work. The conflict in *Young Man in Chains* between the claims of family and religion on one hand and the pull of the world on the other—the stuff of so much of Mauriac's art—is here not dramatized but only sketched with the thinnest of pencils and in language that is incapable of coming to grips with the subject and the characters. Instead, it circles around rather foggily, conveying not the intended spiritual fervor so much as the overstuffed middle class parlors of the turn of the century, with their useless knickknacks, crowded display and cosy sentimentality.

"One evening, much to his astonishment, he found himself clasping Marthe's photograph to his heart. On his knees before the open window which framed a space of sky drenched with moonlight, he felt that in spite of all his spiritual poverty, he was yet a privileged being, and knew that, for him, the divine grace had taken on the form of human love."

This rapturous young man is Jean-Paul Johanet, living alone in Paris on a good income, far from his father, a bluff landowner of Guyenne whose delights are hunting and fishing. Jean-Paul prefers to occupy himself seeking poetic quotations that will lend substance to his solitude and aimlessness and justify his inability to become involved in a genuine personal relationship. Priggish, ethereal and inexperienced, he exhausts his emotions on literature and postures his way through life.

He is recognizably a distant cousin of Julien Sorel or Frédéric Moreau, other young men who attempted to live the dreams and ideas which filled their heads. But, where Stendhal and Flaubert treat their romantic heroes with considerable irony, Mauriac handles Jean-Paul with overwhelming solemnity and pathos, surely the sign of the author's youth and his inability to separate himself from a young man still so near to him.

A meeting with an old friend introduces Johanet to a group of young Christians led by Jerome Sérvat, who want to break with their bourgeois world and establish contact with workingmen in an attempt to demonstrate Christianity in action. A brief trial of this life, with unquestioning homage demanded by Sérvat and an unwanted emotional entanglement with a young worker from which he extricates himself with deliberate cruelty, convinces Jean-Paul that this movement is as false as his earlier comfortable, pointless existence.

A fresh attempt to touch reality through dissipation—night clubs, champagne and a little mistress in Passy—also fails. Jean-Paul is bored with the endless inanities of mild debauchery and finally returns to the old familiar world in which his vocation will blossom. He will marry his cousin Marthe Balzon, a simple young girl whose family estate borders the Johanet estate and whose dead mother and the dead Mme. Johanet were devoted friends. Although Jean-Paul, devoted to his proud solitude and self-analysis, has treated her with selfish indifference, her love has been tenacious and is ready to receive him at the end.

Young Man in Chains displays all the Mauriac weaknesses without those virtues which enable us, in his best work, to overlook his lack of humor, his tendency to exhort us, to think for his characters, to set them right. The thinness of the emotional fiber also draws our attention to his other flaws: the absence of social background, of love between the extremes of depravity and exaltation, of the whole play of psychology in the intermediate range of social behavior.

In his major works he will compensate for these absences through the development of his powerful gifts. This first novel shows us just how far he had to travel to produce those books which make the measure of his triumph over the weaknesses displayed here.

REVIEWERS

George Greene, who has appeared in *Atlantic Monthly, Thought, The Critic* and other magazines, is making his first appearance in The Commonweal.

Edwin Kennebeck is on the staff of a leading New York publishing house and serves as movie critic for *Today* magazine.

Brian Wilkie is a member of the faculty at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire.

Michele Murray has reviewed for *Jubilee*, the *Catholic Reporter* and the *Washington Post*, among others, and is currently at work on a novel.

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